

Protocol for Agency Placement Admission and Discharge

There is an array of out of home services available to children in Iowa within each DHS Service Area. Although the ideal place for children is with their families; when it is not possible to keep a child in the child's own home, keeping the child close to that home is the desired alternative. Placement within the child's Service Area is intended to facilitate the movement of children back to their home communities to preserve connections to their families, schools, and community based supports. DHS and JCS will focus on this principle by making referrals to contractors within each Service Area.

This protocol supports the expectation that youth will be placed within their Service Areas, will have their individual case plan needs met as identified by the referring worker, will prevent unnecessary lateral transfers, and will prevent discharge from placement without a safe and appropriate discharge plan.

Assumptions and operating principles:

1. This protocol applies to DHS and Juvenile Court Services (JCS) placements in CWES, FGC, and SAL. It does not apply to CWES placements made by Law Enforcement.
 2. The Admission and Discharge Protocol will be used statewide and applies equally to all beds included in the CISR Contract.
 3. Contracted beds will be available on a first come, first served basis and placements will occur in a timely manner.
 4. Referring entities provide required case information at the time of the referral and placement. Referring worker will identify treatment needs of the youth and expected outcomes at the time of the referral to assist the contractor in developing a successful service plan for all youth. Contractors should have internal agency and community supports identified to assist with individual needs such as mental health stability and management (including physical aggression and self-harm behavior), runaway behavior, inappropriate sexual behavior and boundaries, programming recommendations, and curriculum supports for intellectual disordered youth.
 5. Admission denials may be based on contracted parameters such as gender under the appropriate circumstances, when the contractor is not contracted with the client's Service Area, or when a referral for admission would cause the contractor to exceed its contracted capacity. These are not considered denials but are withdrawn by DHS as not a match for placement.
- If situations are identified that the contractor believes is not an appropriate referral as it may jeopardize the safety of children in placement these situations shall be described by the contractor and addressed per the review process below. Each case shall be viewed individually based on current information presented at the time of referral.
6. Unplanned discharges will be predicated on safety considerations and will follow the review process.

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7. Admission denial and unplanned discharge reviews and decisions will be concluded at the lowest level possible. See the review process below.

8. Changes in the level of placement (e.g., hospitalization due to illness or injury) shall not be considered an unplanned discharge.

Allowable admission denial:

1. When the referral is not of the gender that the contractor is contracted to serve.
2. When the referral would cause the contractor to exceed its contracted capacity.
3. When the contractor is not contracted with the client's Service Area and denies admission.
4. Decisions regarding any other admission denial will be made via the review process for a requested admission denial.

Allowable unplanned discharge:

When a need has been identified that cannot be provided in the current placement in conjunction with community services AND an appropriate alternative placement has been identified and has accepted the youth, the review process for a requested unplanned discharge may be initiated.

Review process for admission denial and unplanned discharge:

1. Contractor shall advise the referring entity to request the denial of admission or unplanned discharge of a child. For the DHS, notify the assigned worker. For Juvenile Court Services notify the Juvenile Court Officer (JCO).
2. Contractor shall advise the referring entity to request the denial of admission within one hour of receipt of referral.
3. Agency workers will notify their supervisor of this request. For JCS cases, the supervisor of the JCO will be notified.
4. The contractor shall initially provide a verbal description of the situation, to be followed with a written description to DHS or JCS by the end of the following business day. The description shall provide evidence of need that has been identified that cannot be provided in the referral or current placement AND what appropriate service is recommended.
5. If a request is unresolved, the DHS SAM/designee will review it and make the final decision on behalf of DHS cases. These reviews will be done by the Chief Juvenile Court Officer (CJCO) or designee on behalf of JCS cases.
6. The decision on the request for an unplanned discharge will be made within 1 business day of receipt of a shelter contractor's request. When an unplanned discharge request is approved, the decision will define the timeframe for removal of the child.